



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Northeast Region

Native American Tribes A Summary of Activities

Refuges and Wildlife

An active partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex and the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

In mid-2000, the acting Refuge Manager Gary Andres made a commitment to working with the Narragansett Indian Tribe located nearby the Refuge Complex office. Land in coastal Rhode Island was being purchased and developed at an unprecedented pace as the nearby metropolitan populations (Boston, Providence, Hartford, New York City) discovered the beauty and unique quality of shoreline Rhode Island. As with most Native American cultures, the Narragansett Indian Tribe is culturally and traditionally tied to the land and water and the natural resources associated with them. Mr. Andres recognized the value in an active alliance between the Tribe and the Refuge.

During Mr. Andres tenure as acting Refuge Manager: he fostered and completed a law enforcement Memorandum of Agreement (see Law Enforcement Memorandum of Agreement Below); initialized land protection measures adjacent to Tribal

lands; worked closely with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and acted as a focus for protecting one of the most archaeologically significant parcels in coastal Rhode Island (see Bacari Property below); initialized formalization of a traditional right-of-way across Refuge lands (see Maynard Property below); and commenced development of a Cultural Resource Management memorandum of understanding.

The current Refuge Manager, Charles Vandemoer, continues to pursue an active partnership and fully supports coordination between the Refuge and the Tribe.

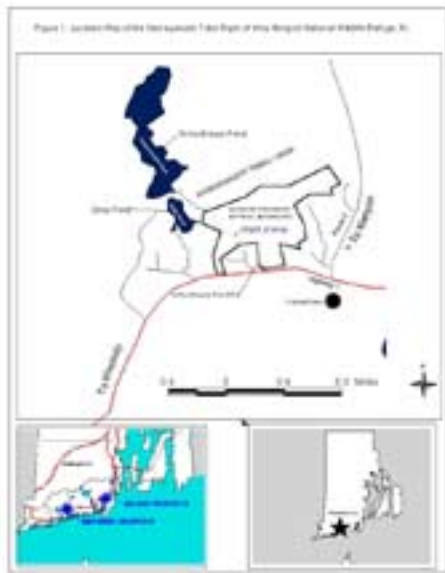
Law Enforcement Memorandum of Agreement (MOA):

This MOA formalized cooperation and training services between the Service's Division of Law Enforcement and the Narragansett Tribal Police. Under the Agreement, both Service Special Agents and Tribal Police are authorized to enforce Federal and Tribal laws dealing with the protection and conservation of fish, wildlife and natural resources on Tribal lands. A subsequent Memorandum of Agreement is being considered to formalize a similar relationship between Tribal Police and Refuge Officers.

The Maynard Property Right of Way:

Granting this right-of-way enables the Tribe to facilitate and continue traditional recreational, cultural and ceremonial activities on adjacent Tribal lands (see figure 1). Additionally, it improves access for emergency response services while Tribal activities occur. It also allowed the Tribe to complete a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) sponsored road improvement project to facilitate access. The reconstruction project had been approved by the U.S. Federal





Highway Administration and the BIA and was developed by a licensed Rhode Island road engineer prior to Refuge acquisition. The road had been in use by the Tribe for centuries. Prior to European contact, it was used as a primary shoreline access route when Tribal families would migrate to the coastal salt pond and ocean shoreline to take advantage of the saltwater fisheries and to establish summer camps. After European contact, Tribal members lived in the vicinity in the Historic Village of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, a National Register District.

Bacari Property:

The site (see figure 2) was designated by the State Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission and described by the State Archaeologist as perhaps the most archaeologically significant “pre-European contact” site in RI discovered to date; it includes a significant village site and extensive burial grounds (estimated 200 burials). Evidence of Tribal use was discovered during extensive development of the site for a subdivision. The site was included in the recent Land Acquisition boundary. Senator Jack Reed’s office was instrumental in 2001 to appropriate partial funding to acquire and protect the site. It offers a very unique opportunity to restore the habitat while interpreting pre-contact village life. Currently, the Trust for Public Lands is seeking partnership by other organizations to obtain the remaining needed funding.

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center Facility Exhibits

The Eastern Neck NWR in Rock Hall, Maryland is working with an exhibit contractor at Eastern Neck NWR to develop visitor center exhibits to be located in the recently-renovated historic hunting lodge. One of the exhibits deals with the history of the island, from Native American occupation to the establishment of the refuge. One of the display cases will focus on the Native American history, touching briefly on the parallel changes that were occurring in the Native American occupation and the development of the Chesapeake Bay itself, then focusing on depicting a Woodland-era site, based on one that has been documented on the island. Artifacts will be included in this display from among those that have been collected on the refuge by archeologists. Because there are no federally recognized Tribes in Maryland, the Refuge will be contacting Native American groups in the area that would wish to be consulted regarding this project.



Ecological Services

The Maine Field Office’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program is working cooperatively with the Penobscot Indian Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians to resolve nuisance beaver problems. Occasionally, beaver dams built in culverts causes flooding on Tribal logging roads. Installing beaver exclosures resolves flooding threats and prevents the drainage of valuable wetland habitat. Since 1999, 24 exclosures have been installed to maintain water levels on nearly 500 acres of wetlands.

Beaver-created wetlands on Tribal lands provide important habitat to Federal Trust species and other wildlife. The ponds or flowages behind beaver dams create high quality habitat for wood ducks, black ducks, woodpeckers, bats, rails, eagles, flycatchers, moose, amphibians, reptiles, aquatic insects, rare plants, and many other wetland-dependent species. Tribal foresters and Partners staff have documented the presence of nesting tree swallows, wood ducks, ospreys, great-blue herons, little brown myotis, hooded mergansers, and black-backed woodpeckers in dead trees within flowages. Snag trees provide perches for foraging bald eagles and olive-sided flycatchers. In short, Tribal beaver wetlands act as wildlife magnets.

In addition to continuing our partnership successes and cooperative beaver-wetland work, the PFW program will be initiating other habitat restoration and enhancement programs with Native American Tribes in Maine. This includes replacing undersized culverts, seeding down log landing areas and spent gravel pits to reduce erosion and stream siltation. Efforts are underway to restore stands of red oak, beech, and wild apple trees. Acorns, beech nuts, and wild apples represent an important and declining source of food for pine grosbeaks, evening grosbeaks, bohemian waxwings, ruffed grouse, deer, American marten, black bear, and many species of wildlife. Other forestry initiatives include creating more snag trees in heavily managed forest tracts on Tribal land. The PFW program will also be working with the Tribes to help create more wildlife friendly agricultural lands.

This will be accomplished through practicing rotational cropping, planting a few rows of grain crops (corn, oats, sunflowers) on potato fields for wildlife, and establishing 8'-10' wide native brush hedgerows on grasslands and potato fields for migratory birds.



Fisheries

The Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Office has conducted a survey with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the U.S. Geological Survey to determine the survival and growth of Atlantic salmon fry in two tributaries of the St. Lawrence River in upstate New York. Atlantic fry were stocked in several tributaries from 1999 - 2000. The results suggest that some of the St. Lawrence River tributaries may provide suitable habitat for Atlantic salmon. Further work is needed to examine inter-annual variation in survival, especially over-winter survival.

The Penobscot Indian Nation in Maine requested 5 months of technical assistance from the Service in the area of Fisheries Management last September. Specifically, the Tribe requested the support for assistance in fish population assessment on their land in order to strengthen management and regulatory decision making. Since the Tribe was requesting that a biologist work on Tribal land for a period of 5 months, the Service began to look for alternative funding sources within its Flex Funding allocations. The Maine Anadromous Fish Coordinator and the Maine Field Office submitted a proposal to the Gulf of Maine Rivers Ecosystem Team requesting funding to support this temporary position. This proposal was recommended as a high priority project with in the Gulf of Maine Rivers Ecosystem as it compared with other projects that were submitted. As a result, the Tribe hired a Temporary Fisheries Biologist with the Gulf of Maine Rivers Ecosystem Flex Funding that conducted work directly on the Penobscot Indian Nation Reservation in 2001.

Law Enforcement

The Region 5 Law Enforcement have entered into an Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Narragansett Indian Tribe. The MOA was signed by the Regional Director on July 11, 2001. The MOA was developed to share law enforcement expertise with Tribe, and provide training, intelligence information, specialized equipment, funding, other facilities, and to designate law enforcement officers to efficiently enforce all laws administered by the Service and the Narragansett Indian Tribal Police relating to fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.

On November 7 & 8, 2001 Region 5 Law Enforcement Special Agents sponsored a two day training (Waterfowl Identification and Shotgun Familiarization) for Tribal game wardens and conservation officers. The training session was hosted by the Penobscot Indian Nation, Indian Island, Old Town, Maine. On November 7, Special Agents provided a full day of waterfowl identification training to ten Tribal game wardens and conservation officers. On November 8, Special Agents provided a three hour training session on shotgun familiarization training to eight Tribal game wardens and conservation officers at the Old Town Police Department's firearms range in Old Town, Maine. Tribal folks that participated were from the Penobscot Indian Nation, Narragansett Indian Tribe, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and both Passamaquoddy (Pleasant Point and Indian Township Reservations) Indian Tribes.

Region 5 Law Enforcement provided \$7,500.00 to the Passamaquoddy Tribe to help fund supplies and materials necessary for the construction of a radio tower (Boundary Bald Mountain Radio Tower) near their reservation in Maine. The radio tower, which is the first link in a planned Tribal conservation network, will connect the Tribe, as well as the Service, to other areas in Western Maine. The radio tower construction was completed and operational in mid-November 2001.



Training

On October 18, the Native American Liaison conducted a presentation on "Federal Trust Responsibility to Federally Recognized Tribes in Region 5" for a Region 5 Ecological Services Biologist Workshop held at the National Conservation Training Center. This was the first time in approximately seven years that all Region 5 Ecological Services biologists have had the chance to meet together. There were approximately 150+ biologist in attendance at the workshop and approximately 40-50 biologist showed up for the presentation.

The Northeast Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hosted its first Tribal NEPA Workshop on February 12 and 13, 2002 at the Regional Office in Hadley, Massachusetts. The NEPA workshop was a result from a request from Narragansett Indian Tribe Natural Resources Director Dinalyn Spears inquiring about whether the Service could offer such a training. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was invited to participate and share their NEPA information as well. The NEPA workshop was attended by Tribal natural resource staff from the Narragansett Indian Tribe, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Tuscarora Nation, and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians. This workshop is part of the Services commitment to the Tribes regarding training opportunities listed in the Service's Native American Policy and the Region 5 (Northeast Region) Implementation Plan. A similar workshop is in the works for next year.

Other Activities

On August 14, 2001 the Native American Liaison attended a Model Tribal Federal Partners Project (Project) Meeting that was hosted by the Penobscot Indian Nation in Old Towne, Maine. The meeting was the second (first meeting held the Spring of 2000) of two meetings that focused on a project within the Penobscot River drainage regarding contaminants and restoration. The initiation of this project resulted from an Memorandum of Understanding between federal natural resource agencies and the New England Tribes. Pursuant to the MOU, it states that the "New England Federal Partners for natural resources agree to work with the New England Tribes on an Government-to-Government basis to promote a more integrated and comprehensive approach to the management, conservation restoration and protection of New England's natural resources." Specifically, the main focus of the project will be "to restore the Penobscot River to the environmental condition it was in during the 1820's when the Tribe (Penobscot Indian Nation) signed the last treaty with the State of Maine." Federal agencies involved in this project are: the Service, National Park Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Federal Highway Administration, Geological Survey, Army Corps of Engineers, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (under the Department of Health), University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and the U.S. Forest Service. Federal and Tribal Work groups were identified to accomplish the objectives set forth by the partners.

On August 20, 2001, the Maine Field Office Project Leader presented a paper titled "Atlantic Salmon Recovery in the Northeast - Penobscot Indian Nation" written by the Service and Penobscot Indian Nation's Natural Resources Director John Banks at a "Partnership in Tribal Fisheries - A Basis for Fishery Success in the 21st Century" symposium (Native People's Section) held in conjunction with the 131st Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society in Phoenix, Arizona during September 19-23, 2001. The "Atlantic Salmon Recovery in the Northeast - Penobscot Indian Nation" paper discussed the history of Atlantic salmon runs and other species of migratory fish, which sustained Native Americans in the Penobscot River watershed, and several joint agency-Tribal salmon long-term recovery efforts through the establishment of strong working relationships with the Tribe. Additionally, a total of 12 papers were presented by various Tribes during this Tribal session dealing with variety of fisheries issues regarding

cooperative efforts between Tribes and resource agencies in restoring or managing fish populations, some of which are listed as endangered or threatened in Indian country throughout the Nation. Participants from the Native People's Section went on a field trip to the Gila River Indian Community to observe a cooperative aquaculture / endangered species project involving the bonytail chub.

On September 16-19, 2001 the Native American Liaison attended the Northeast Regional Conference of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) hosted by the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. The theme for the 2001 Northeast Regional Conference of the NAFWS was "Partners for Conservation." The Conference was broken into three sessions which included: a Conservation Officer Shoot Competition, a General Session focusing on Partnerships, and a Hazardous Materials Marine Spill Response Training. The Native American Liaison participated in the following session topics: 1.) R5 Native American Policy Implementation Plan - provided an update on action items set forth in the Plan, 2.) Federal Partners Roundtable Discussion on Expanding Partnerships, 3.) conducted a Power Point presentation on "Shoreline Sensitivity - Biological Considerations" for the Hazardous Materials Marine Spill Response Training session, and 4.) conducted a Power Point presentation on the "Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program" for the Grant Programs Overview and Funding Opportunities Workshop session. Additionally, the NAFWS invited Regional Director Dr. Mamie Parker as a Guest Luncheon Speaker, but unfortunately Mamie could not make it. However, acting Deputy Regional Director Rick Bennett was asked to deliver the speech in behalf of Mamie. Rick's speech focused on the introduction of the new Native American Liaison, the recently approved R5 Native American Policy Implementation Plan, and information on the R5 Invest in People Program that will reach mid-level managers to help create a more engaged workforce across Service programs. The Conference was well attended considering the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

On October 25, 2001 the Native American Liaison prepared and submitted nominations for three Tribal programs for the Honoring Nations 2002 application. The three programs were: the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Environment Division, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) Natural Resources Department, and the Penobscot Indian Nation Natural Resources Department. Specifically, the Honoring Nations program

is administered by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development and is an awards program that identifies, celebrates, and shares outstanding examples of Tribal governance. The above three programs are examples of outstanding Tribal governance that should be recognized for their contributions towards self-governance in Indian Country. They have all made outstanding positive changes in addressing environmental issues / concerns / needs / problems / challenges that face their people and natural resources every day. Should these programs get selected, they will have demonstrated the principles that have made them successful for building a strong and sustaining program that can be shared / inspired by other Indian nations throughout the Country. The selected eight High Honors recipients will receive a \$10,000.00 award to be used for sharing their success story with others. The selected eight Honors programs will receive \$2,000.00. Additionally, "the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development will prepare reports, case studies and instructional materials based on award-winning contributions, that can be used by Tribal decision makers, public officials, students and others interested in promoting and fostering excellence in the governance of American Indian nations."



If you have an questions regarding Native American activities in the Northeast Region of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, please contact Native American Liaison D.J. Monette at 609/646 9310 (New Jersey Field Office) or 413/252 8662 (Northeast Regional Office), or e-mail at dj_monette@fws.gov Federal Relay Service for the deaf and hard-of-hearing 1 800/877 8339



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